

DE News

November 16, 2001 – Iowa Department of Education – Ted Stilwill, Director

4th grade proficiency scores improve

One of the most encouraging bits of news from this year's Condition of Education report is the improvement in 4th grade reading and math proficiency scores. While the gains are modest, they are meaningful in light of the strong emphasis we have placed on early intervention programs and investments in instruction. I am confident that if we stay committed to optimum class sizes and combine that with quality professional development programs for teachers, our modest gains will become more substantial.

Your commitment at the local level - from school boards to administrators and educators - has proved to be the deciding factor in the success of these achievement initiatives. Districts with strong implementation strategies and the determination to continue during difficult challenges know the programs are valuable for both students and teachers.

You can find the complete Condition of Education report on our Web site at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/oofd/newsrelease.html>. Highlights include:

Public school enrollment:

- 494,291 students compared to 498,607 students in 99-00, a decline of 4,316 students or 0.9%.
- Graduating seniors outnumber kindergarten students, 36,892 to 33,977.
- Enrollment is projected to decline to about 482,000 students in school year 2005-06.
- Enrollment increased for all racial/ethnic groups: Hispanics by 11.4%, African American by 3.3%, American Indian by 2.9%, Asian by 0.4%.
- 9.4% of students, or 8,151 total, are Limited English Proficient (LEP), up from 7,453 the prior year.
- Two school districts, Des Moines and Sioux City, accounted for about one-third of the state's LEP students.

Class size average 00-01 compared to 99-00:

- Kindergarten 18.6 (19)
- 1st grade 18.8 (19.4)
- 2nd grade 19.7 (20.1)
- 3rd grade 20.6 (20.8)

Student Achievement using biennial period data from 1999-2001

4th grade reading comprehension at or above proficient level:

- 67.8% compared to 67.7% last year.
- 64.9% of females and 70.9% of males
- 69.8% of Whites, 38.8% of African Americans, 45.1% of Hispanics, 64.5% of Asians, 47.2% of American Indians.

- 50.3% eligible for free or reduced lunch, 74.6% not eligible.

4th grade math at or above proficient level:

- 71.4% compared to 71.0% last year.
- 70.8% of females and 72.6% males.
- 74.0% of Whites, 41.6% of African Americans, 47.3% of Hispanics, 71.0% of Asians, 52.6% of American Indians.
- 55.3% eligible for free or reduced lunch, 78% not eligible.

8th grade reading comprehension at or above proficient level:

- 69.3% compared to 69.7% last year.

8th grade math at or above proficient level:

- 73.6% compared to 74.1% last year.

11th grade content area reading at or above proficient level:

- 74.8% compared to 75.1% last year.

11th grade quantitative thinking at or above proficient level:

- 79.6% compared to 80.1% last year.

Drop-outs as a percent of public school students in grades 7-12:

- 1.75 (year ending 2000).
- 1.51% female, 1.99% male.
- Whites represented 83.5% of dropouts (and 92.4% of total enrollment).

Intentions to pursue post-secondary education or training:

- 82.7% of graduates, compared to 78.7% in 99-00.

Teacher data:

- The average Iowa teacher earned \$6,419 less than the national average.
- Teachers in the smallest districts of 250 students or less earned an average of \$14,852 less than the national average.
- Iowa teacher salaries rank 36th in the nation
- Average number of teaching assignments, public school teachers grade 9-12: 3.06

More districts sign up for career paths, salaries

About 350 of Iowa's 371 districts are participating in Option 2, the career paths and salaries component of the teacher quality initiative. A complete list of participants will be on our Web site Monday, November 19. Participating districts should receive their funding next week.

Check out your new budget

Most of you should have received updated information about your revised budget allocations following last week's Special Session. District-by-district and community college details also are online at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/>.

Districts should keep in mind that the Special Session legislation only authorized flexibility for funds allocated for the 2001-02 school year and only for the categorical funds received for technology, early intervention and Phase III. Each district should examine the short- and long-term consequences of shifting the use of these funds.

DE News provides timely information about legislative and policy issues, grants and funding, trends in education, and other items of immediate interest to Iowa educators and policymakers. Contact Kathi Slaughter, 515/281-5651; fax 515/281-4122; email kathi.slaughter@ed.state.ia.us.